Prevention of the American public educational system's promotion of flawed historical narratives.

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The Southern Poverty Law Center highlights over 10 states with 10 key missing features of slavery education rooted in American public schools (Sawchuk, 2018). Historical narratives are taught with similar standards throughout the country, and when flawed, present critical challenges. One key challenge of flawed historical narrative education is its use to gather flawed support for political decision making. Yale President Savoley describes that flawed narratives cause a great deal of political damage and "in a national election season, you do not need to look very hard to find them," (Savoley, 2016). Savoley highlights that false narratives are everywhere, especially in political environments, and are used to fuel campaigns and skew electoral decisions. Building onto this point, the misinformation, detailed by Professors Kenyou and Johnson from the University of Minnesota state that flawed narratives "can be reflected in state or district educational policies and practices that have no scientific evidence," (Kenyou, Johnson, 2024). Kenyou and Johnson highlight that widespread educational practices are also filled with flawed narratives. It is critical to alter the educational policies that spread misinformation.

The problem of false narrative education places partial blame on teacher bias. Professor Fredrik Alvén from Malmö University describes how some teachers deny the existence of controversy and instead teach as if true answers to complex moral disputes exist (Alvén, 2023). Through teachers only analyzing single-viewed perspectives, they deny the complexity of historical events and reduce them into easily comprehensible ideas. Additionally, the issue of false narratives is so widespread because of the development of media and curriculum that also falsely interpret history. Despite the textbooks and other scholarly resources being provided to

educate students in American public schools; further research from multiple diverse perspectives on the topic suggest that the public education system utilizes biases that influence political opinions and corrupt students' cultural identity. Instead, federal policies that alter district education should be implemented to increase the perspectives of narratives from diverse ethnic groups, to increase provision of accurate historical events.

Political challenges of flawed historical narratives

With the vast number of flawed historical narratives being taught in American public schools, political challenges of governmental control and skewed electoral decisions arise with nationalistic beliefs being suppressed. To begin, Almazar, a professor at Central Washington University highlights that the structure of public education itself against creativeness and rather toward a common American narrative is rooted in local, district, and state school boards that make curriculum decisions (Almanzar, 2018). The false narratives educated in American public schools are very prominent due to the government itself pushing out narratives through school boards. This governmental control is so critical as it provides a way for the expression of flawed narratives that shape students toward a common American narrative. One specific case of this idea can be found in the current Israeli-Palestine conflict in which Dr. Journell, a professor at the University of North Carolina details that although inclusion of perspectives to the American public seems insignificant, certain ethnic groups who reside in millions in America like Israelis and Palestinians, the narratives are central to a sense of identity (Journell, 2011). The education of conflict from biased historical perspectives alters how ethnic groups like the Israeli and Palestinian populations in America view themselves. Utilizing Almazar’s claim of government rooting for the issue, Journell expresses that although American citizens may feel insignificant to the one-sided perspectives. By excluding viewpoints, the false narratives skew the political

decisions that are made with the basis that best fit the flawed cultural identity. Furthermore, the education of historical narratives leads to the suppression of nationalist views, Professor Fredrik Alvén from Malmö University pinpoints that government made educational standards underpin destructive nationalist ideas, but also promote ideas about globalism, democracy, mutual international understanding and peace (Alvén, 2019). Alvén utilizes the claim of rooting for issues of flawed narratives resulting from governmental control, proposed by Almanzar, to express challenges of the government establishing educational standards to replace nationalist views with policies that serve its own interests.

Instructional material challenges promoting flawed narratives

Media adoption of educational standards and textbook resources have been a critical challenge to reducing the education of flawed historical narratives. Amherst graduate Thomas Brodey details that much of the blame must be placed on textbooks, which undermine the complex web of purpose within history into a convenient single narrative (Brodey, 2022). With almost the entire nation utilizing one book for AP classes; “American History: 10th edition”, the technological innovation with credible, but limited information is pushed into students' hands, resulting in a flawed understanding of history. Furthermore, Andrew Benoit, a high school instructor at LHS, highlights that the Brinkley textbook states that KKK Klan leaders came from the most respected segments of society, and engaged in nothing more dangerous than occasional political speeches (Benoit, 2020). The Brinkley textbook, used nationwide, dangerously mis-spreads information about the clan, one of history's most destructive groups. Benoit applies Brodie's claim of the blame on textbooks to pinpoint the criticality of the flawed narratives in important textbooks. Although textbook material is a primary issue, the curriculum taught to students is a critical issue needed to be addressed, that is highlighted by Professor Hornbeck at

the University of Memphis and Professor Malin at Miami University, and detail that since 2021, nearly one-third of states have banned K-12 school curricula that offer critical views of the racist past in America, (Hornbeck, Malin, 2023). The state governments within America have altered learning standards, only promoting those that portray the past of the Nation in a positive manner. A critical perspective that the other sources fail to address is presented by a museum containing the Latina Singer Selena's mannequin, that appears misfit when wearing her pink jumpsuit and "signals the frequent misfit of official Selena commemorations that often fail to fill out the contours of Selena as she is remembered by legions of her Latina/o fans," (Stimulus Source: Paredez, 2009). This quote depicts that fans recognize Selena, but picture her differently due to a false nostalgic remembrance of Selena's movie counterpart, Jennifer Lopez. This principle applies to the education system presenting flawed historical narratives that shape the memory and nostalgia of students when used to make critical electoral decisions. The instructional material challenges that promote flawed narratives are a multi-layered issue, with multiple factors including textbooks, curriculum, and nostalgia that different researchers argue for.

Historic Leadership Initiative solution

The first potential solution that arises to solve the issue of flawed narratives is rooted within federal policies. Education Historian Diane Ravitch states, "The federal government and states must develop policies to recruit, support, and retain career educators," (Ravitch, 2014). To refute the education of biased and flawed historical narratives, it is critical that the school boards ensure a credible staff with knowledgeable historians are educating students. This can be solved through policies that recruit and efficiently train staff. In addition, in order for any changes to occur, the solutions must be implemented through federal policy, as the government controls district school boards. A key limitation that is presented by the need of federal policy is the

challenge in gaining attention and help from the government. Luckily, the solution is within arm's reach. Organizations already implemented in widespread throughout the nation, such as the Parent Teachers Association, are created to give students and families a voice within the educational process. Public advocacy in collaboration with organizations like the PTA can ensure that the government is likely to become involved to address flawed historical narratives and improve student outcomes. This solution was not chosen because of the difficulty in addressing the primary issue of poor instructional tools that spread the flawed historical narratives. Although addressing teachers educating biased information, a massive part of the problem remains unchecked.

The second potential solution that arises to solve the issue of flawed narrative education is found within curriculum and technological changes. Ivy Reed, a student at the Missouri School of Journalism highlights that textbooks should not only teach students American actions, but the implications of them within other countries, (Reed, 2021). The resources used in American public schools are biased with single-perspectives that inaccurately depict the consequences of American actions. Instead, this solution proposes adoption of multiperspective online sources, such as the OER commons, which illustrate credible multi-perspective country implications and perspectives on historical actions. In addition, Dr. Kindenberg from Stockholm University highlights that fourth-grade students who were tasked with presenting historical perspectives demonstrated increased historical awareness, but difficulty with document analysis, (Kindenberg, 2024). Kindenberg is able to provide a stronger claim than Reed, through her credibility, which assists in the expression of importance of students analyzing historical perspectives. Kindenberg builds onto the point of the importance of teaching students actions and implications, through adding the curriculum of document analysis to help students have increased historical awareness.

The change in curriculum is a proven solution to increase historical knowledge, and prevent the spread of false narratives in education, but a key limitation arises, namely, the critical skill of document analysis. To prevent this, the curriculum solution details adaptation of multi-document analysis to continue developing this skill, as a key process. To build up on the point of new learning procedure implementation, Professor Ramsey at Seattle Pacific University describes how creative writing programs can be implemented to ensure students are historically accurate with information of both physical and emotional characteristics, (Ramsey, 2017). The change of curriculum can also implement new learning procedures, hand-in-hand with document analysis to ensure students have accurate historical understanding of narratives. This solution was not chosen because it does not highlight how to actually implement the technological and curricular changes, as there is no direct way to force this upon governmental controlled school districts.

The proposed solution to address the American public education system flawed historical narrative education is called the Historic Literacy Initiative, and comprises 4 major acts. The first act that will be passed is the Historical Verification Standard Act, which follows similar principles to the National Historic Preservation Act, and establishes a board with scholars and historical researchers to denounce whether certain historical narratives are able to be taught. Next, the moving curriculum procedure will ensure that students practice document analysis of multiple historical perspectives in certain events, to ensure that the historical knowledge is accurately reflected, as well as having developed skills like document analysis. Furthermore, the Civic Engagement and Accountability Act, will educate students the impact and accountability of historical actions, with many historical files unveiled to students. Having a greater established access to accurate historical accounts will ensure that accurate and greater variety of information is passed down to students. Finally, the Historical Education Act will place tighter restrictions on

the hiring of educational staff, to increase qualifications; and thus have a more credible staff educating students historical events, and limiting the spread of flawed, biased narratives. This proposed solution blends aspects of federal policy, which gets acknowledged by district school boards from the attention of representative organizations like the PTA. The funding of this solution, specifically the HVSA board will come from American tax dollars, of which hundreds of billions of dollars are spent on the military alone, leaving the educational system critical. Although there are limitations of disputes in curriculum content, and teachers possibly not being able to meet qualifications, the establishments of verification boards may not provide what districts want to teach, preferring an American narrative, but the board will ensure accurate and important information is educated. In addition, training certifications of procedures to prevent biased information and qualifications allow teachers to retain their positions. This solution ensures accurate historical knowledge, better student skills like document analysis, and refutes detrimental challenges of flawed narratives and false nostalgia, that was exhibited in Selena's museum.

The current situation in American public education is detrimental. The flawed historical narratives are proven to alter cultural identity of students, and even lead to skewed elections with promotion of a common American narrative. Although counterarguments, like those from Georgetown and Columbia University graduate Stephen Shawshuck, highlight that there is no systematic approach to this flawed narrative issue, (Sawshuck, 2018), the proposition of the Historic Literacy Initiative ensures that curricular and technological challenges, as well as stricter educator regulations are made through public advocacy in the form of representative organizations. These changes are made in federal acts, as school districts are controlled by governmental organizations. Challenges may arise with gaining federal attention and support, but

organizations like the PTA which aim to give the community a voice can assist with implementation. The Historical Leadership Initiative solution is critical to prevent flawed historical knowledge of students that cause detrimental changes to a cultural identity and skew elections, and protect society from detrimental recurrence.

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